

July 27, 2006

Office of General Counsel
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20463-0001

MUR # 5779

2006 JUL 31 A 11:10
FEDERAL
ELECTION
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF
GENERAL
COUNSEL

Dear General Counsel,

This document serves as my formal letter of complaint against the **City of Santa Clarita, California** for violation of Federal Election Laws.

City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard
Santa Clarita, California 91355

voice: (661) 259-CITY (2489) FAX: (661) 259-8125

This document includes:

- Section 1 Introduction
- Section 2 Overview of Complaint
- Section 3 Details of Complaint
- Section 4 Table of Exhibits
- Section 5 Conclusion
- An accompanying 24-page document containing the exhibits referred to in this document.

Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

I was very disappointed to read in my local newspapers (see Exhibits 21, 23 and 24 in accompanying Exhibits document) that the FEC apparently told attorneys representing the City of Santa Clarita that the City was within its legal rights to display 12 or 14 huge signs stating the City's support of a Federal Candidate, Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, candidate for the 25th Congressional District in California.

It seems very inappropriate to issue a verbal approval of a questionable behavior without every receiving a complaint or having an opportunity to review the concerns of any complaining citizen.

That being said, I am filing this complaint anyway, based on my understanding of the following documents I found on the www.FEC.gov website:

- The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA or McCain-Feingold).
- Campaign Guide for Corporations and Labor Organizations and the BCRA Supplement.
- BCRA Supplement.
- Shays Rulemaking Supplement.
- Campaign Guide for Nonconnected Committees (October 2005).
- Nonconnected Guide Supplement (July 2006).

27044163481

To the best of my knowledge, everything in this and the accompanying Exhibits document are a true and accurate representation of facts. I have done my best to attribute facts not personally known to me to their source. If there is any confusion, questions or concerns about any particular statement or exhibit, please let me know as soon as possible and I will address them.

Section 2 – OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINT

I am attempting to show in this complaint that the City of Santa Clarita, California, is responsible for implementing a massive illegal advertising campaign, that by FEC definition, supports the candidacy of a Federal Candidate, Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, candidate for the 25th Congressional District in California. The main points as I see them are:

1. The City of Santa Clarita did produce and publicly display 12 or 14 banners supporting a Federal Candidate. (I was told 12 by City staff, and I only saw 12, but the newspapers said 14)
2. The signs, as written and displayed, meet the FEC's "Reasonable Person" test for regulated election advertising materials.
3. The advertising value of the signs was sizable and well within the limits regulated by the FEC.
4. Because of their sizable donation to the political campaign of a Federal Candidate, the City of Santa Clarita, should have been required to register with the FEC as a Political Committee.
5. Because FEC regulations state that "no incorporated entity may contribute to a Federal Candidate's campaign," and because the City of Santa Clarita is incorporated, they are prohibited from making any contribution of advertising to said campaign.
6. Despite the City of Santa Clarita's claim that the signs were not intended to show support of a Federal Candidate, the City's main purpose for the signs WAS to show the City's support for that candidate.

I believe the City of Santa Clarita has violated one or more Federal election laws as outlined, but not limited to those listed above.

Section 3 – DETAILS OF COMPLAINT

1. The City of Santa Clarita did produce and publicly display 12 or 14 banners supporting a Federal Candidate. (I was told 12 by City staff, and I only saw 12, but the newspapers said 14)
Photographs in the accompanying Exhibits document clearly show 12 signs, typically 6 by 20 feet in size, prominently displayed in 12 locations within the City of Santa Clarita.

2. The signs, as written and displayed, meet the FEC's "clearly identified candidate" test and "Reasonable Person" test for regulated election advertising materials.

Before Howard P. "Buck" McKeon became a congressman, he was a member of the Santa Clarita City Council and served as Mayor of Santa Clarita. He is very well known in the Santa Clarita Valley by his nickname, "Buck."

The city displayed signs with the City's Logo saying "THANK YOU, BUCK, for HR 5471! No Mega Mining in Soledad Canyon."

Although the City officially claimed (see Exhibits 15, 19, 21, 23 and 24 in accompanying Exhibits document) that the signs were intended to pique curiosity about the bill and get people to call and write "Buck" to encourage him to support the bill, a "reasonable person" would have to conclude by the wording of the signs, that some or all of the following is true:

- a. The City of Santa Clarita wants the general public to believe that Congressman Buck McKeon had put an end to "Mega Mining in Soledad Canyon." There is no other way to interpret the signs, other than it was a done deal.

- 27044163483
- b. People who don't have any idea what HR 5471 is, would have to conclude that the City of Santa Clarita wants the general public to believe that Congressman Buck McKeon did something very good for the city and that the City IS, and the general public SHOULD BE grateful.
 - c. The City of Santa Clarita is grateful to and supports Buck McKeon. Such displays of public appreciation can only be interpreted as overwhelming support of that elected official. In effect, they are saying Buck is wonderful – we're not telling you who to vote for, BUT Buck is wonderful and the City of Santa Clarita wants you to support him.

As an indication that the many people in the general public DO interpret the signs as a public display of support for candidate Buck McKeon, please see the "Letters" to the editor of *The Signal* newspaper (see Exhibits 17, 22, 25, 26 and 28 in accompanying Exhibits document).

These are examples of people who actually took the time to write the local newspaper. There are others who spoke at City Council meetings, called the city to complain, and many others who told me personally that they do not support the City publicly supporting Buck McKeon with signs.

- 3. The advertising value of the signs was sizable and well within the limits regulated by the FEC.

Exhibit 27 in the attached Exhibits document shows the locations of 12 signs and my computations of total advertising value to the McKeon congressional campaign.

The traffic volume and actual sign costs were provided by City of Santa Clarita.

It is probably significant to note that all of these signs were placed in high volume traffic areas where that are extremely visible to every motorist. Unlike large billboards that are normally off to the side of the road and can be overlooked, these signs have to be viewed by every drive and probably most passengers driving under them. The City of Santa Clarita owns these right-of-ways and are the only entity allowed to put advertising there.

The advertising values were determined by reviewing several appropriate websites and listing the low and high values for "CPM," which is an industry standard way determining comparable value of various advertising media. CPM indicates 1,000 views of the advertising.

My computation shows that "THANK YOU BUCK" signs were viewed 262,000 time per day, or more than 7.8 million time during the projected 30-day run for the signs. Considering that the City staff person who gave me the traffic volumes told me that the figures were occasionally one to three years old, the actual volume may be much greater.

Based on actual costs, guesstimates for design, installation and removal labor costs, plus the advertising value, the Buck McKeon campaign received a donation from the City of Santa Clarita valued at between \$28,000 and \$47,000 or more.

- 4. Because of their sizable donation to the political campaign of a Federal Candidate, the City of Santa Clarita, should have been required to register with the FEC as a Political Committee.
- 5. Because FEC regulations state that "no incorporated entity may contribute to a Federal Candidate's campaign," and because the City of Santa Clarita is incorporated, they are prohibited from making any contribution of advertising to said campaign.
- 6. Despite the City of Santa Clarita's claim that the signs were not intended to show support of a Federal Candidate, the City's main purpose for the signs WAS to show the City's support for that candidate.

On July 14, 2006, in an email reply to an email query from me, Gail Ortiz, Public Information Officer for the City of Santa Clarita, states that the prime reason for putting up the signs was to show support for Buck McKeon. The full text is available as Exhibit 16 in the accompanying document, but I quote the following phrases here:

- a. Paragraph two states "the City Council is very appreci of Congressman McKeon's introduction of H.R. 5471."
- b. Paragraph four states "much support for Congressman McKeon and H.R. 5471 was the necessary call to action."
- c. Paragraph six states "the banners were developed with the goal(s) being to first thank Congressman McKeon for the introduction of the legislation."

While FEC regulations do not require intent to determine an advertisement's permissibility, I think the above admission as to the intent of the City of Santa Clarita, clearly shows that the City wanted to show Buck McKeon that they were big supporters of him, but knew they could not overtly ask people to vote for him. Any blatant public display of affection by a local government for a Federal Candidate surely indicates support for that candidate's election to office.

Section 3 – TABLE OF EXHIBITS

#	page	date	item	importance
1	1		typical sign	sign measures 6 by 20 feet
2	2		sign detail	seal of the City of Santa Clarita shown on sign
3-14	2-8		12 signs	12 signs shown hung in 12 locations around the City of Santa Clarita
15	9	7/4	Signal article	first newspaper article I saw talking about the signs
16	10,11	7/14	email from Gail Ortiz	Ortiz responded to a query from Bruce McFarland (me) about the signs. She states a. The City of Santa Clarita wants the general public to know that Congressman Buck McKeon put an end to "Mega Mining in Soledad Canyon." b. People who don't have any idea what HR 5471 is, would have to conclude that the City of Santa Clarita wants the general public to know that Congressman Buck McKeon did something very good for the city and that the City is, and the general public should be grateful. c. The City of Santa Clarita is grateful to and supports Buck McKeon.
17	12	7/16	Letters to the Editor	Both letters challenge the City's publicized notion that the signs are supposed to pique curiosity and get people to call Buck McKeon.
18	13	7/18	Guest Commentary in the Signal	Bruce McFarland's (my) article outlining concerns about the signs
19	14,15	7/19	news article from the Daily News	Newspaper article talking about controversy and City Attorney's response

20	16	7/19	editorial in the Signal	Editorial by the Signal's senior editor, Leon Worden, questions the legitimacy and advisability and effectiveness of the signs. He shows some disbelief as to the choice of wording for the signs.
21	17,18	7/21	news article from the Daily News	newspaper article stating that the banners received an OK from the FEC concerning the display of the signs. Article does quote one resident that is critical of the signs and makes the point that "the signs are indistinguishable from what campaign supporters of McKeon would do."
22	19	7/22	Letters in the Signal	Five more letters from citizen's in local newspaper critical of the City's show of support for McKeon.
23	20	7/23	front page story in the Signal newspaper	In this front page story, City Attorneys tell the Signal reporter that they have received information from the FEC making them conclude that the City is within its rights to display to banners.
24	21	7/23	story by Santa Clarita City Attorney	This story appeared on the front page of the Opinion section of the Signal newspaper. It again states that somehow, the FEC told them that it was not necessary to receive a written opinion on the legality of the signs.
25, 26	22, 23	7/25	Letters to Editor in the Signal	More letters from citizens criticizing the city's display of signs supporting Buck McKeon.
27	24		my spreadsheet	This worksheet shows the locations and traffic flows at each location. It calculates the advertising values of the signs based on industry standard measurements.
28	25	7/12	Letters to Editor in the Signal	Another letter I left out above from a citizen criticizing the city's display of signs supporting Buck McKeon.

Section 3 – CONCLUSION

I believe that this particular violation of FEC regulations is most egregious and distasteful as it violates the public's trust in their local government's objectivity and impartiality in regard to the election of public officials.

Although I originally thought that the City erred in their choice of wording, I now believe that the wording was carefully thought out and designed to imply, suggest and indicate the City's support of this favorite son. If they had truly wanted to use the signs to get people to call the congressman to get him to support HR 5471, why didn't they just say "Call Buck to Support HR 5471?" I think their actions were deliberate, calculated and deceptive.

I do understand that the motives of an entity are not the deciding factor for determining violations of the law, but I also think the wording on the signs speak for themselves.

While I don't like the idea of the City being fined (because innocent citizens will have to pay for it), I do feel it is critically important for the FEC to publicly state that local governments are not above the law and should be required to act in a totally legal manner that is beyond reproach.

I look forward to your ruling.

Thank you for your consideration.


Sincerely,


Bruce McFarland

State of California, County of Los Angeles
Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on
7-28-06 by Bruce McFarland

Date

- ☒ personally known to me
☐ proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence
to be the person who appeared before me.


Signature of Notary Public



from the desk of

Bruce McFarland

Valencia CA 91355

July 27, 2006

Office of General Counsel
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20463

Dear General Counsel,

This document contains the exhibits listed in my accompanying complaint.

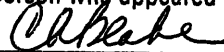
Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,



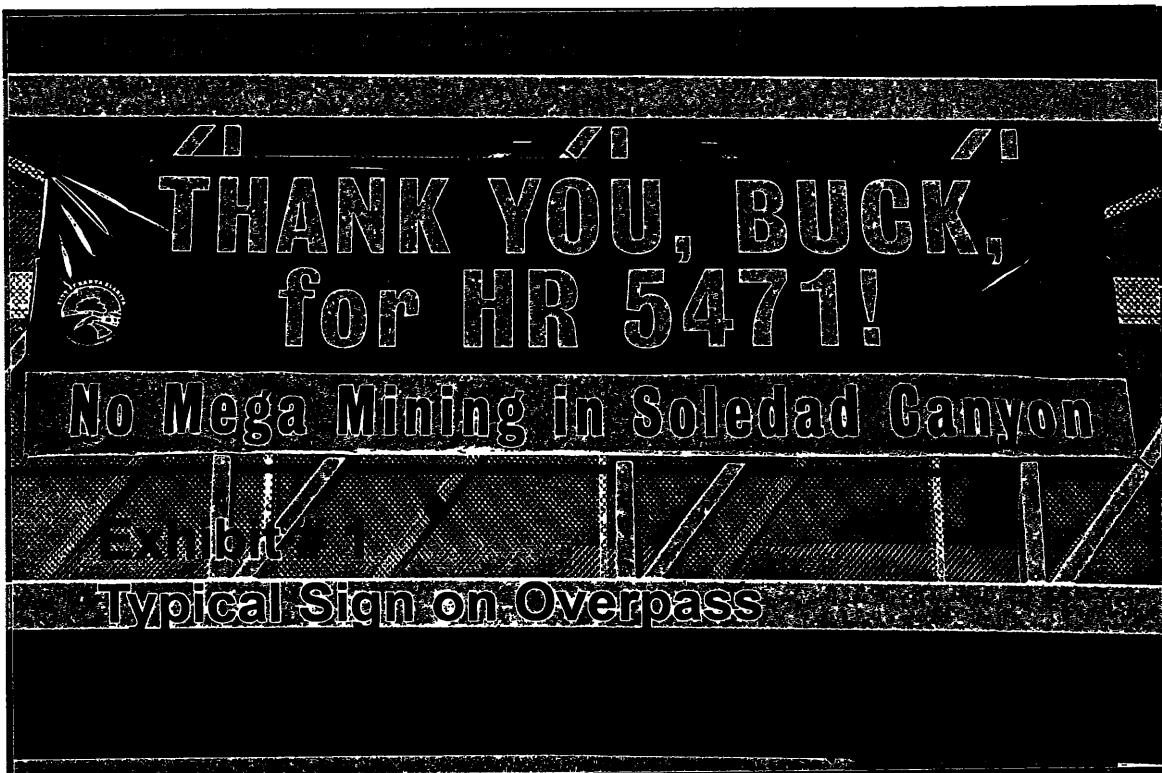
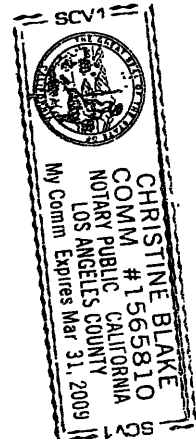
Bruce McFarland

State of California, County of Los Angeles
Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on
7.28.06 by Bruce McFarland

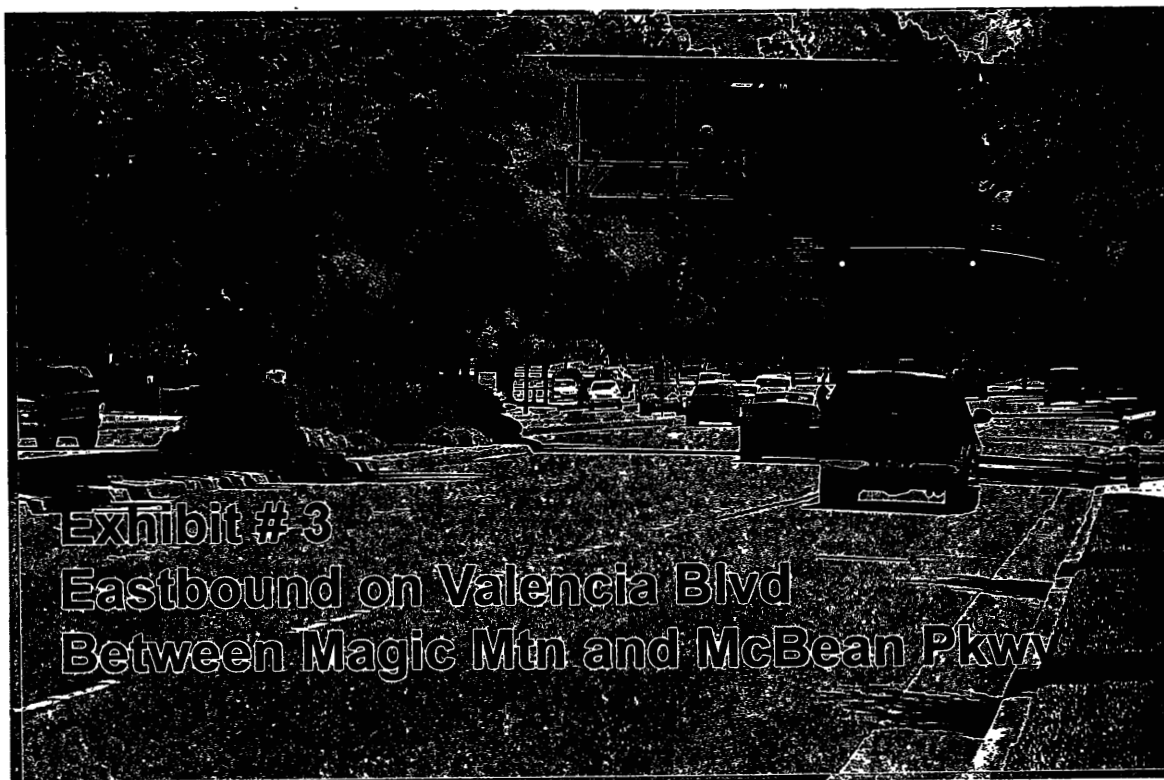
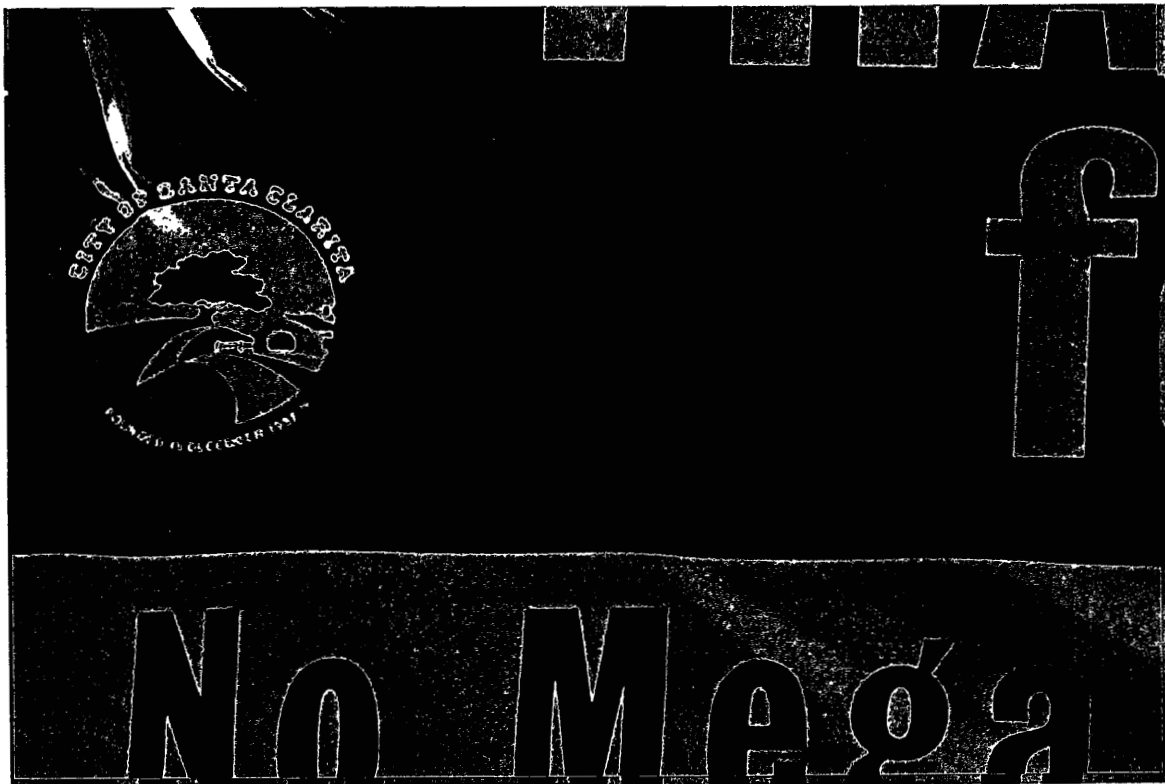
Date
☒ personally known to me
☐ proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence
to be the person who appeared before me.



Signature of Notary Public



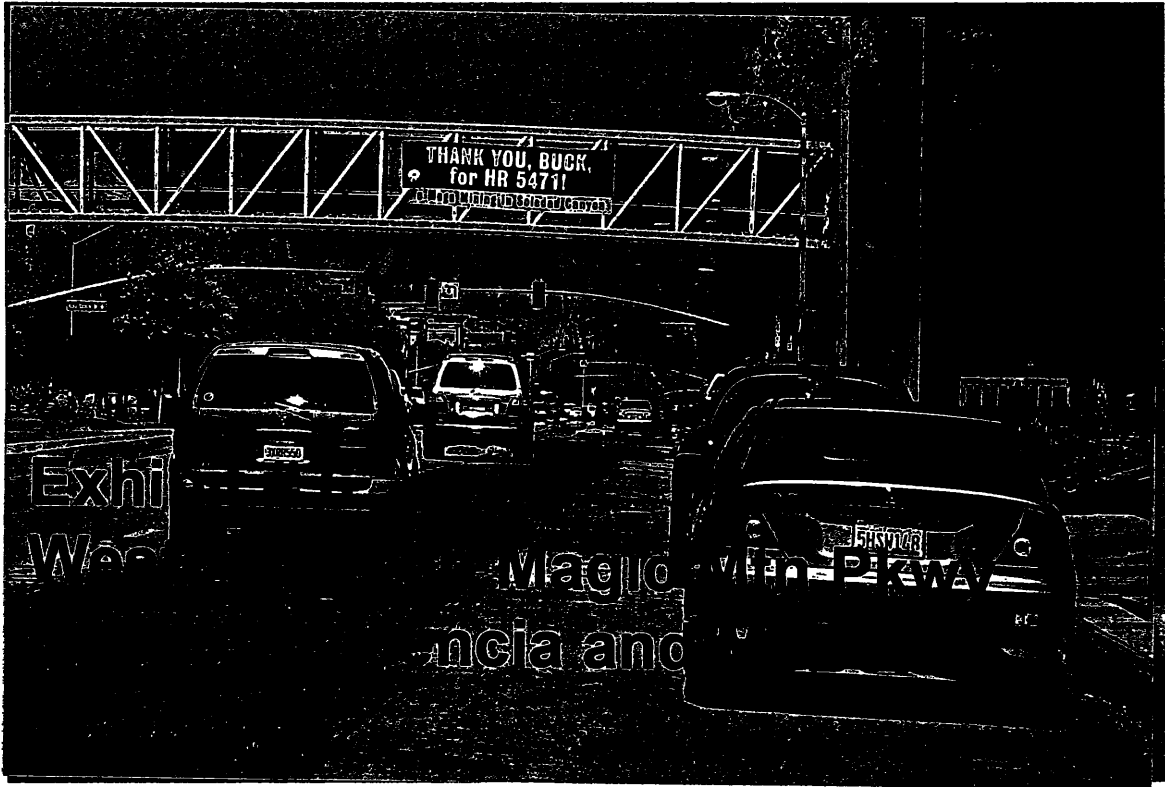
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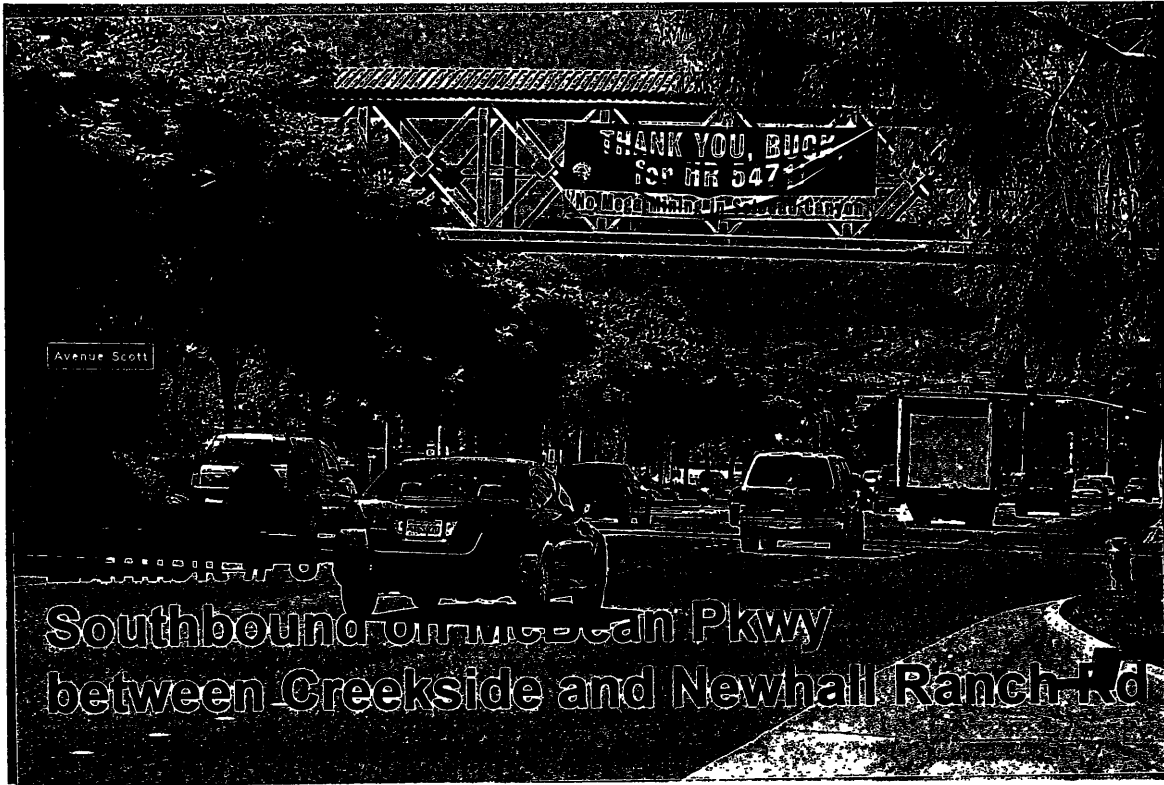
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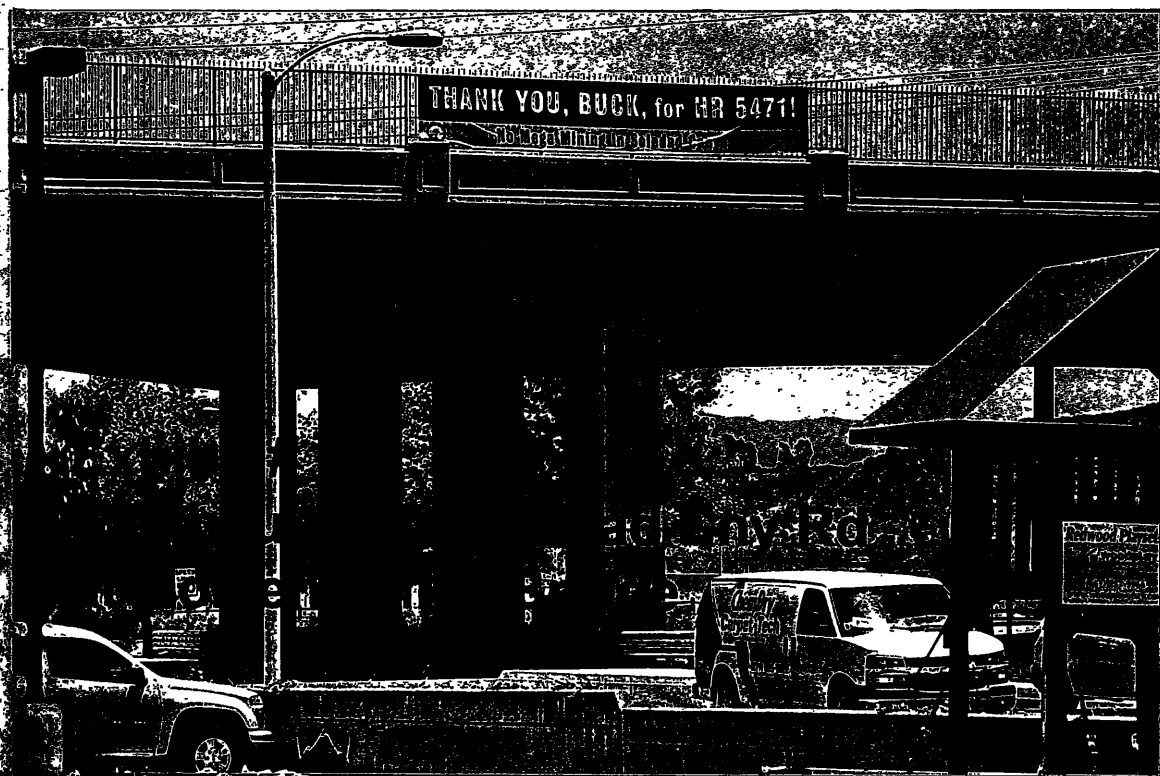
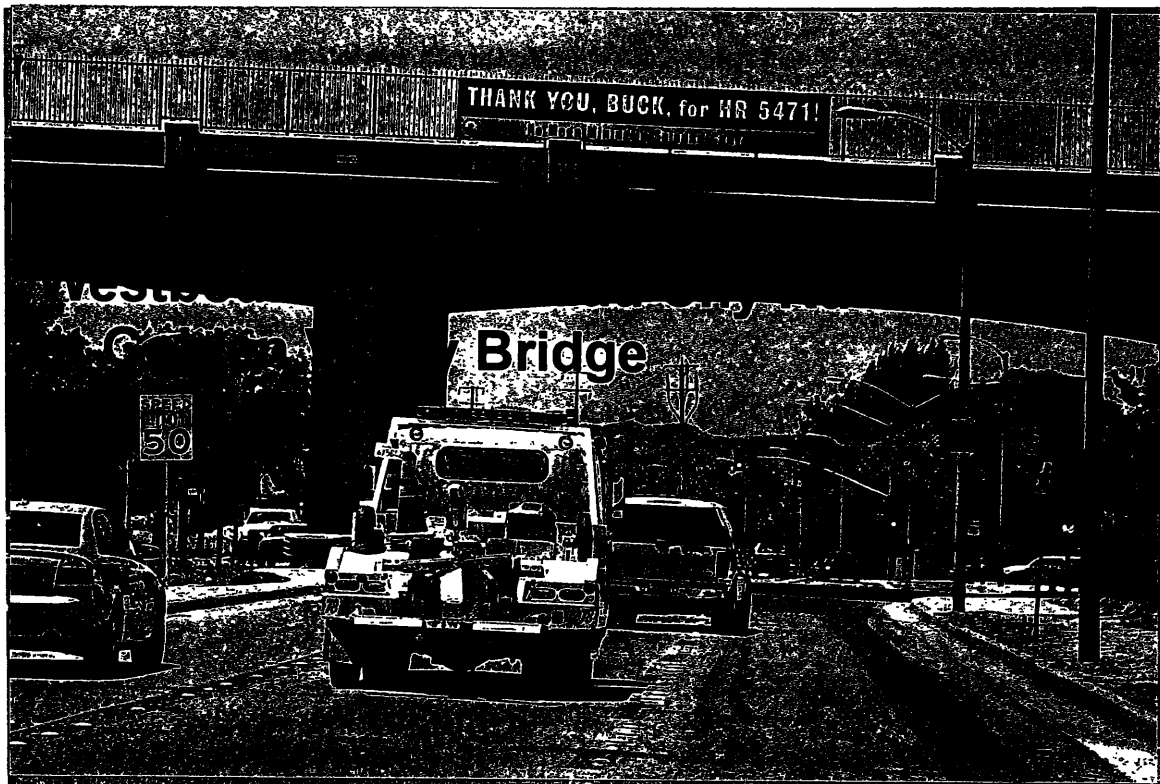
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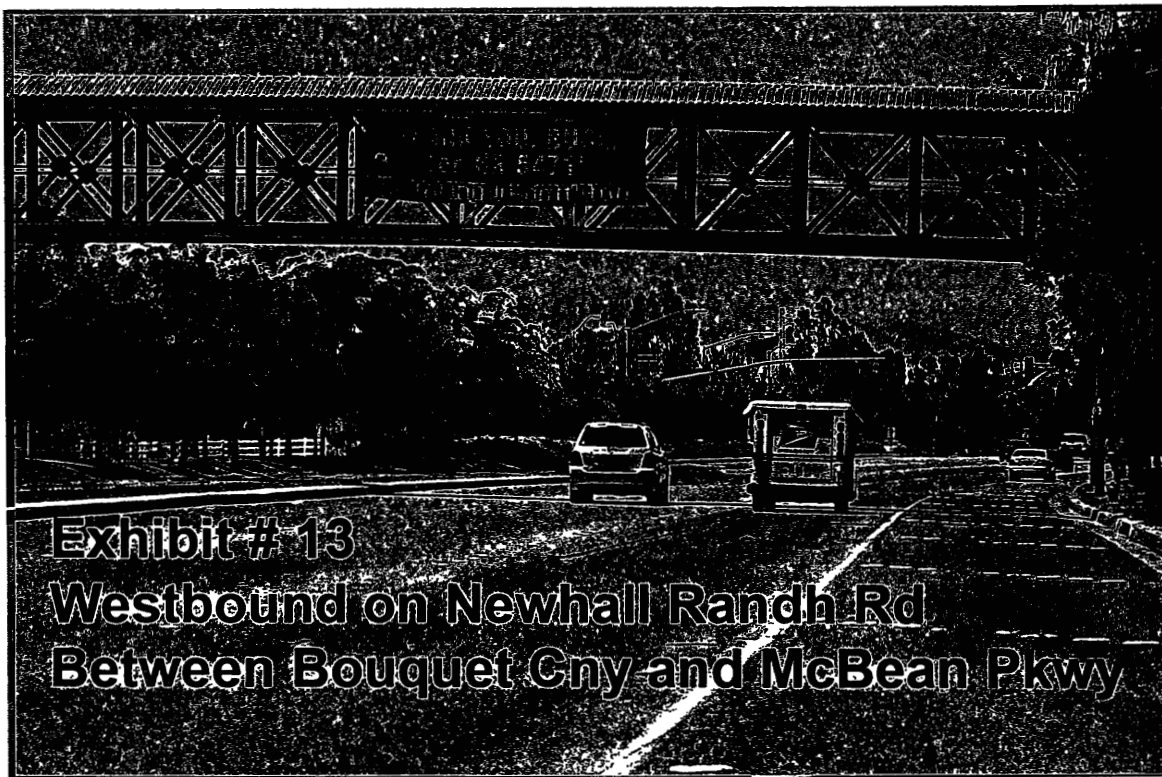
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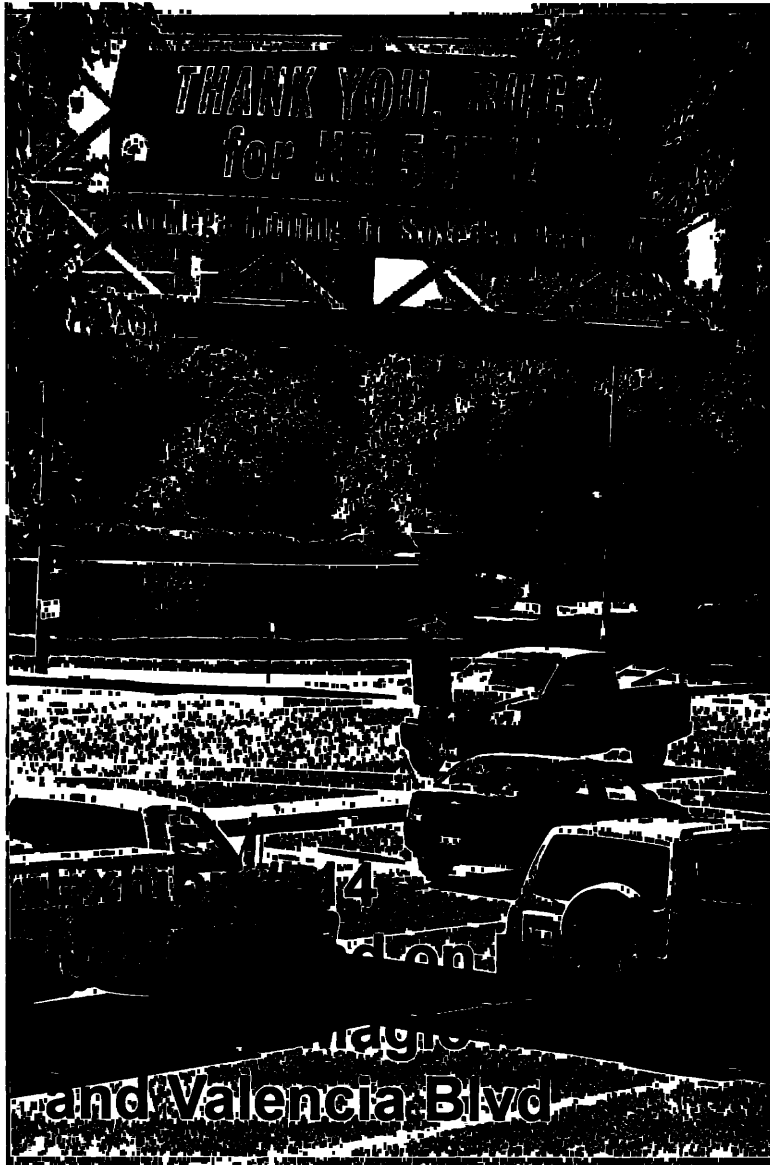
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27044163494



City Shows Support of McKeon's Cemex Bill

By Josh Premaka
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

In light of a recently introduced congressional bill that could thwart large-scale mining in the Santa Clarita Valley, the city is stepping up its opposition to a planned mine.

Motorists may have noticed several large banners hung over roads, proclaiming, "Thank you Buck, for HR5471," and residents should expect to receive postcards, in the mail soon.

The efforts are directed toward a mine Cemex Inc. plans to begin operating in

Continued from page A1

Soledad Canyon in 2008, extracting 69 million tons of sand and gravel over 20 years to produce 56 million tons of concrete aggregate.

Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon recently introduced HR5471 — a bill that, if passed, would provide Cemex with mining options outside the valley and severely limit any other mining here to historical levels of several hundred thousand tons per year.

While the city owns the land, Cemex was awarded mining rights by the federal Bureau of Land Management, and both the city and the concrete giant have been locked in a years-long, multimillion-dollar legal battle.

City officials said the mine will only bring excess traffic and air pollution to the area.

"We are doing a lot more outreach in light of the (recently introduced) legislation," said Fina Haddad, assistant to the city manager.

In addition to the several banners placed around the city, she said mailers will be sent to residents, asking them to return the affixed, postage-paid postcard to McKeon, R-Santa Clarita, showing their opposition to Cemex.

City officials will also be passing out the postcards during today's Fourth of July parade, Haddad said.

The materials were funded by money the city set aside for community outreach in the city budget. The exact cost of the city's campaign materials was unavailable Monday.

City Councilman Cameron Smyth said he believes McKeon to be "100 percent" behind the bill and said "our job is to make sure the community is behind it (as well)."



BRYAN KNEIDING/The Signal

Banners, like the one pictured on the bridge over Magic Mountain Parkway, thank Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon for introducing H.R. 5471, a bill that would provide Cemex Inc. with mining options outside Santa Clarita Valley and limit additional mining in the SCV to historical levels of several hundred thousand tons per year.

From: Gail Ortiz

Sent: Friday, July 14, 2006 11:18 AM

To: scvBruce@MyTownUSA.com

Cc: Tina Haddad; Toi Chisom; Michael Murphy; Ken Striplin; Ken Pulskamp

Subject: RE: Comments needed ASAP

Dear Bruce:

As you are probably aware, the City has been fighting the proposed Cemex mega-mining project in Soledad Canyon for more than six years.

And while the fight still continues, the fact that Congressman "Buck" McKeon introduced H.R. 5471, know as the "Soledad Canyon Mine Leases Adjustments Act," is a major milestone for the City and our residents. H.R. 5471 will protect both the needs of our community, as well as the financial concerns of Cemex and the City Council is very appreciative of Congressman McKeon's introduction of H.R. 5471.

I can not state enough that the introduction of this legislation is such a high point for the City, as the concepts contained in H.R. 5471 are an outgrowth of approximately 18 months of discussions between the City of Santa Clarita and Cemex.

Yet, it became very clear that the advancement of H.R. 5471 was going to take great efforts and that much support for Congressman McKeon and H.R. 5471 was the necessary call to action.

Consequently, the City embarked upon a campaign to engage the support of residents and neighboring communities, specifically for the advancement of the legislation.

And, as part of the campaign the ***"THANK YOU BUCK, for H.R.5471-No Mega Mining in Soledad Canyon"*** banners were developed with the goal(s) being to first thank Congressman McKeon for the introduction of the legislation and second to hopefully peak the curiosity of the community to want to find out what H.R. 5471 is all about and what they can do support.

I am pleased to report that the banners have been very effective. We have received countless calls from residents inquiring about the legislation and what they can do to help! Thank you for your inquiry, please let me know if I can answer anything else for you.

Gail Ortiz
Communications Manager

City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Blvd. #300

gortiz@santa-clarita.com

tel:
fax: 661-255-4314
661-259-8125

Add me to your address book...

Want a signature like this?

From: Bruce McFarland [<mailto:scvBruce@MyTownUSA.com>]

Sent: Friday, July 14, 2006 10:35 AM

To: Bob Kellar; Cameron Smyth; Frank Ferry; Ken Pulskamp; Laurene Weste; Marsha McLean

Cc: Michael Murphy; Gail Ortiz; Sharon Dawson

Subject: Comments needed ASAP

Greetings City Council and staff members,

I have not received any comments from anyone about the "Thank Buck" signs unlawfully and ill-advisedly displayed throughout the City, but I saw that a citizen spoke at the July 11 Council meeting. Unfortunately my recorder shut off near the beginning of Mr. Pulskamp's comments and the meeting's minutes are not yet displayed on the City website. I would like to know what Mr. Pulskamp and any Council member had to say, or if anyone would like to make a comment for me now.

I am currently working on an article and would like feedback as soon as possible.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Bruce McFarland

27044163497

YOUR VIEWS: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Exhibit # 17
from The Signal
newspaper on
July 16, 2006

us in this mess. Let's go back to an era where greed and exploitation are not the American families' values.

Carole Lutness
Valencia, via e-mail

Editor's note: Not that there's much difference, but technically, the banners read, "Thank you, Buck," and not, "We love you, Buck." They are an attempt on the part of the city of Santa Clarita to rally support for the bill that would curtail Cemex's mining plans in Soledad Canyon.

deleon's question: Who paid for the ads?

Richard Shafarman
Saugus, via e-mail

Editor's note: For the record, The Signal is not involved with the banners. We were merely trying to explain their intent, as they have generated considerable confusion. To date, the city has spent more than \$6 million in the fight against Cemex; the banners are part of that fight. Who pays? Ultimately, the taxpayers of the city of Santa Clarita.

Answer to Question About Banners Missed the Mark

Editor:

On July 12, you printed a letter in which Michael Middleton asks a reasonable question: He wanted to know if his tax dollars paid for the banners on passos thanking Buck McKeon for HR 5471.

Your response was embarrassing. You state that the purpose of the banners was to "grab your attention so you'll call McKeon's office and urge him to push the bill through Congress."

Nice try at a recovery, but the thoughtful voter is not buying it. There is no indication on the banners that it is a bill still being deliberated. Unless one knows the daily doings of the U.S. House of Representatives, anybody who saw those signs would be led to believe that McKeon had really accomplished something.

You explain in your response that it will still take phone calls to the congressman's office urging him to push the legislation through Congress. It seems to me that you inadvertently let on that Buck is a reluctant warrior for this cause.

Let's be honest. The banners were designed to extol Rep. McKeon. Santa Clarita City Manager Ken Pulkamp explains that while driving, you can read only so much verbiage. If space is limited and impact must be made, and the intent was not to laud Buck but to "pique curiosity" and generate a phone campaign to Buck's office, why were the few words not "Call McKeon's Office and Urge Passage of HR 5471?"

Signal and Pulkamp, you blew this one.

But what has me most frustrated is that you neglected to answer Mr. Mid-

Signs are Sly Way to Help McKeon's Reelection

Editor:

Please don't kid yourself. The "We love you, Buck" signs are nothing but a sly way to help his campaign for reelection. "See, folks, how much Buck has done for this community." Bah, humbug. His current bill pending which will "save" us from Cemex is a payoff to them as well as a way to shift them onto another community.

The crux of the problem is that Cemex is our NAFTA nightmare. NAFTA, which Buck voted for as he voted for CAFTA, allows any behemoth corporation to set up shop in a foreign country, disregard all of that country's laws, pollute at will and exploit the native work force. I guess it's OK when giant U.S. corporations go down to Mexico and do this, but it's not OK when a giant Mexican corporation does it here. We are seeing first-hand what we are doing in underdeveloped countries and we don't like it. Well, they don't like it, either. It is NAFTA that is wrong. And it is a prime example of Buck and the Republicans' twisted thinking that corporations are above the law, that profit is more important than people and the environment, that resources are for "privatizing" and that dog-eat-dog corporatism is going to improve our lives.

I believe the American people are beginning to see that unbridled corporatism is ruining this country and this world. It's time to retire Buck and all his DeLay cronies who have gotten

City Leaders: Arrogant, Blind, or Just Smarter than Me?

It's really a shame when our civic leaders admit a mistake and still refuse to correct it. I'm talking about all those "Thank You, Buck" signs the city has hung all over town.

The problems I have with the signs are not just political, although I gladly admit I'm a partisan person. I'm a proud Democrat and I certainly don't like an opposition candidate getting free publicity — especially at taxpayer's expense. But I'll let you decide for yourself which of my concerns are purely partisan and which address important civic issues.

Bruce McFarland

Guest Commentary



In a less environmentally sensitive area, most people who read and understand the wording on the signs would conclude that our representative got a bill passed that will reduce mega-mining in Santa Clara River. They make it look as if it's a done deal and we're thanking Buck for his accomplishments. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Yes, Buck introduced a bill, but it had no Democratic co-sponsors and Buck couldn't even scrape up one Republican co-sponsor. The bill was immediately sent to the Land Use Committee, where I expect it will sit until after Election Day in November, at which time it will suddenly disappear off the face of the Earth.

If Rep. McKeon had really wanted to rally support for the bill, he should have lined up some co-sponsors.

His fans claim he's a very powerful congressman. I say: Show me. My partisan self says McKeon just needed to tell voters he was doing something about Cemex so he could get reelected. I'll let the voters make that call.

Even motorists (and occasional pedestrians) who don't know what an "HR" is, will conclude that Buck did something very good and the city is very grateful.

If city staffers really wanted to get people to call Buck, they might have said something like, "Call Buck" or "Let Buck Know" or "Tell Buck to Fight for HR 5471."

Michael Murphy, Ken Pulaskamp and others at the city claim the signs are supposed to pique curiosity and get people to call McKeon and express support for HR 5471, a bill that McKeon recently introduced into Congress. It would limit the amount of gravel mining Cemex could do in the Soledad Canyon riverbed, and give Cemex other land to mine

The FEC does not allow any incorporated entry to ... make independent expenditures supporting a federal candidate. Therefore, what the city did for Buck is not legal.

When I recently talked to city staffers, including Michael Murphy, the intergovernmental liaison and the man responsible for the anti-Cemex campaign, I was told the city is aware that the wording could be misinterpreted. Other staffers said the same thing. In fact, other citizens have called and complained. I invite you to do the same.

So here's the partisan aspect of my complaint: The city of Santa Clara is using taxpayer dollars to support their favorite candidate — one whom I oppose.

You'd think the city would be bright enough not even to consider mounting an advertising campaign that might be construed as a partisan campaign effort. It would be arrogant and un-American for a city to take sides in an election.

But that just what they did. They say it had a different purpose, but it undoubtedly benefits one candidate. It tells the nearly 250,000 people per day who see the signs that the city of Santa Clara supports Buck McKeon.

The Federal Election Commission may have a different take on the matter. The FEC was created to regulate and enforce various election laws imposed by Congress.

Here are some of the rules of law I believe are pertinent to this case:

- Any individual who donates anything of value worth \$50 or more to a federal candidate (such as Buck) is required to

total advertising value of \$29,000 to \$49,000 dollars. I'm sure Buck is very grateful for the unsolicited support.

The FEC's tests for wording on signs are: One, whether the candidate is clearly identifiable; and two, whether a reasonable person would interpret the signs to be supporting the candidate. I believe both of these tests are easily satisfied.

The FEC specifically states that the intent of the author of the signs shall not be considered, only how a reasonable person would interpret them.

In an effort to protect the city from an embarrassing FEC ruling and associated fines, I notified the city manager and others of the violations and gave them ample time to remove the signs and correct the wording. They refused. I notified the City Council members of the violations and gave them an opportunity to correct the wording of the signs. They refused.

Because I firmly believe that no governmental agency is above the law, I am compelled to report these violations to the FEC. I would have hoped our city leaders would act with a little less arrogance and a lot more concern for public opinion.

Maybe the city leaders are much smarter than me, or maybe they just don't want to admit publicly that they made a big blunder, or maybe they just don't care what the people of Santa Clara think.

I'll let you be the judge. I'll be watching the Letters page to see what you think.

Bruce McFarland is president of the Democratic Alliance for Action in Santa Clara. His column reflects his own views, and not necessarily those of The Signal.

Exhibit # 18 - From The Signal newspaper on July 18, 2006

Article Launched: 07/19/2006 12:00:00 AM PDT

Banners thanking McKeon criticized

Democrats say city coffers effectively giving \$5,000 to congressman

SANTA CLARITA - Controversy has erupted over city government's \$5,000 worth of banners thanking U.S. Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon for introducing a bill to severely limit the Cemex sand and gravel mine proposed in Canyon Country.

The message on the 14 large banners hanging around town are misleading and appear to be an illegal political endorsement of McKeon, R-Santa Clarita, who is running for re-election in November, said Bruce McFarland, who heads a local Democratic club.

"I think (city officials) should be held accountable. They should know they're not above the law," said McFarland, president of the Democratic Alliance for Action in Santa Clarita.

City Attorney Carl Newton has said the banners thanking McKeon for introducing a bill to block the planned Cemex mine in Soledad Canyon do not violate federal election codes, but he might learn otherwise today.

Newton said he plans a telephone conference today with officials from the Federal Elections Commission about the legality of the banners.

City officials said the banners were needed to inform people the mine and the bill are not done deals. McKeon was Santa Clarita's first mayor.

Twelve banners - each 7 feet by 20 feet - hang from bridges on well-traveled Valencia streets, and two larger ones - 5 feet by 30 feet - hang on the Golden Valley Road bridge in Canyon Country. The banners' message: "Thank You, Buck, for HR5471!"

The message refers to a bill McKeon introduced in Congress in May that would cancel Cemex's lease to mine 56.1 million tons of sand and gravel - a project city government has spent \$6 million battling - and limiting any future mining at the site to historic levels of 300,000 tons a year. The measure will likely not be considered until next year.

McFarland said he believes banners benefit McKeon's re-election campaign at city government expense and violate FEC regulations.

Federal laws ban city governments from making contributions or independent expenditures to campaigns for or against federal candidates.

Possible gray areas involve the message on the signs - whether it could only be interpreted by a reasonable person as favoring a candidate.

The banners were hung July 1 and will be removed before August, said city government spokeswoman Gail Ortiz. Removing the signs before a complaint is filed would be taken into consideration by the FEC but would not automatically halt an investigation.

Should McKeon be named as a respondent in the complaint, he would have an opportunity to say why a violation did not occur.

McKeon has no involvement with the signs, a spokesman said.



Banners financed with city government funds thank Rep Howard "Buck" McKeon (David Crane/ Staff Photographer)

"We didn't participate in this. We didn't design it. We didn't ask the city to do it. We didn't know about it," said James Geoffrey, McKeon's spokesman. "The city (officials) did this on their own initiative."

Newton has said the banners are not illegal. With Santa Clarita City Council approval, thousands of dollars more from the city's general fund will be spent for postcards and mailers designed to fight the Cemex mine locally and at higher government levels.

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27044163501

Thank You, Dems, for Seeing the Light

**Leon
Worden**

Seize the Day!

I know what you're thinking. When a San Diego defense contractor spent \$17,222 to send Rep. Buck McKeon's chief of staff and his wife to Turkey to meet with foreign government officials in 2004 ... and \$28,446 to send the couple to Australia in 2005 ... and roughly \$10,000 to send another McKeon staffer to Italy ... and then won a \$185-million defense contract in 2005 for 13 spy planes ... why would the city of Santa Clarita spend several thousand dollars to hang a bunch of signs around town saying "Thank You, Buck?" Oh. That's not what you were thinking? Sorry.

Not that it really matters anyway, since McKeon isn't on the House Armed Services Committee anymore.

Which is weird. Who ever heard of a congressman quitting the House Armed Services Committee DURING WARTIME because he's "too busy"?

In recent weeks the city's "Thank You, Buck" banners have generated considerable comment.

Which certainly was the intent. The city wanted to get your attention, and it did. In this case, however, I'm not so sure the city should be measuring its success in volume alone. Most of that "volume" is white noise. Almost to a person, the reaction goes like this:

Why is the city "spending our tax money" to "thank Buck for doing his job" and "helping his re-election campaign?"

The funny thing is, none of those is the case, except the "spending our tax money" part.

In this bizarre departure from truth in advertising, the words don't actually mean what they say.



On Tuesday one of our leading Democratic columnists raised a valid point. It doesn't matter what the signs are SUPPOSED to be for. What matters is what they actually say. "Most people who read and understand

the wording on the signs would conclude that our representative got a bill passed that will reduce mega-mining the Santa Clara River. They make it look as if it's a done deal and we're thanking Buck for his accomplishments. Nothing could be further from the truth." Bruce McFarland wrote in his Tuesday column:

"You'd think the city would be bright enough not even to consider mounting an advertising campaign that might be construed as a partisan campaign effort," he wrote. "It would be arrogant and un-American for a city to take sides in an election."

So far, so good. But here's where Bruce goes south: "I certainly don't like an opposition candidate getting free publicity, especially at taxpayers' expense."

Excuse me? I mean, sure. I don't like the idea of my tax money going to a candidate I don't support, either.

But Bruce? Really? You don't like the idea of your tax money going to a candidate you don't support?

BOY, am I glad to hear that. I'm going to take that, Bruce, to mean you don't support the Clean Money campaign that your Democratic minions have been espousing lately. (You do have minions, don't you?)

For the unwashed, Clean Money is the cleverly named campaign to give every yahoo off the street a shot at public office. Clean Money is where the government would take your tax money and give it to candidates you don't support — candidates who are too unpopular or too clueless or too crazy to raise it on their own.

Picture your job. Picture how hard you work to earn a living. Now picture the City Council. Specifically, picture the member of the City Council you like the least. Now picture being told that the city is going to take some of your hard-earned tax dollars and spend it on the re-election campaign of the council member you can't stand.

And then, for good measure, the city's going to take even more of your hard-earned tax dollars and give it to all the rest of the candidates, as well.

That's Clean Money.

Mc, I like it the way it is. If you want to give money to a candidate, you can. If you don't want to, you don't have to — and nobody's going to take it from you and give it to a candidate you don't like, be it Buck McKeon or Lynne Plambeck.

Brüce, Dude: Thank you. I'll be waiting for your Democratic Alliance for Action to come out unabashedly in opposition to Clean Money because you "certainly don't like an opposition candidate getting free publicity, especially at taxpayers' expense."

Leon Worden is *The Signal's* senior editor. His column reflects his own views, and not necessarily those of *The Signal*.

**Exhibit # 20 from
The Signal newspaper
on July 19, 2006**

Article Launched: 07/21/2006 12:00:00 AM PDT

Thank-you banners get the OK FEC says signs for McKeon are legal

BY JUDY O'ROURKE, Staff Writer

SANTA CLARITA - A city attorney who talked with federal election officials Thursday has determined the giant banners hanging throughout Santa Clarita thanking U.S. Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon for introducing anti-Cemex mine legislation in Congress are legal.

No formal written advisory opinion will be issued by the Federal Elections Commission, whose staff members told the city it is not appropriate in this case.

"After hearing of concerns, the city consulted with the Federal Elections Commission and retains its opinions the banners were appropriate," said Sarah Gorman, an election law specialist with the City Attorney's Office.

Gorman declined to elaborate but said a written request had been sent to the agency. The agency noted no complaints had been received.

The message on 14 large banners hanging around town proclaims: Thank You, Buck, for HR 5471! No Mega Mining in Soledad Canyon. It refers to a bill McKeon, R-Santa Clarita, introduced in Congress in May that would cancel Cemex's lease to mine 56.1 million tons of sand and gravel - a project the city has spent \$6 million fighting - and limit any future mining on the property to historic levels of 300,000 tons a year.

Some residents disagree with the city's stance, saying the banners appear to be misleading, a misuse of city funds, an illegal political endorsement or a violation of local sign codes.

McKeon's office has distanced the legislator from the flap over the banners, saying he had nothing to do with them, that they were solely the work of city officials.

Some interpret the message to mean the bill is a slam dunk, which is not so. Congress likely won't consider the measure until next year, and McKeon has acknowledged its chances of passage are slim.

The banners were intended to broadcast that neither the mine project nor the bill's outcome are final, Ortiz said Tuesday, and are part of a campaign to thank McKeon, pique interest in the issue and garner support for the bill. They were hung July 1 and will be removed before August, she added.

About 150,000 sets of postcards voicing support for the measure and urging California Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer to support companion legislation in the U.S. Senate will be sent to all Santa Clarita Valley households and to some in the Antelope Valley, Ortiz said. The \$5,000 cost for the banners and thousands spent on the postcards comes from the city's general fund, she said.

Officials at McKeon's office said they have received about 900 postcards so far. Feinstein has received about 700, and Boxer has gotten more than 1,000.

Feinstein has been working with the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the city, Boxer and McKeon on finding a solution. Boxer introduced legislation in the Senate in 2003 to terminate the company's leases in Soledad Canyon and to prohibit further sand and gravel mine leases there. McKeon had introduced a companion bill in the House, but neither bill went forward.

Ed Shalom, a 27-year Valencia resident, said he believes the banners are a misuse of city funds, with the city's seal lending an official imprimatur and implied over-all support for the candidate's views.

"The contribution (from) the city is indistinguishable from what campaign supporters of McKeon would do," he said.

"It raises the question regarding Buck's support for the war in Iraq, which is definitely having an effect on our young people, and raises the question if the city is endorsing Buck's position on these other issues at the same time."

He has asked the city to provide written proof the signs are legal.

Bruce McFarland, who heads a local Democratic club, said the message seems to be an illegal political endorsement for McKeon, who is running for re-election in November, and plans to file a complaint with the FEC.

Ortiz said the banners, hung in the public right-of-way, do not violate city codes. While other entities are barred from posting banners on the bridges, the city is allowed to hang these signs, and others throughout the year that promote nonprofit events.

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Exhibit # 22 from The Signal newspaper on July 22, 2006

Banners are Offensive and Politically Incorrect

Editor:

The following is an open letter to Councilwoman Marsha McLean:

I thought I should let you know that the city manager did get back to me regarding the Buck sign. I watched the council meeting (July 11) and as it turned out, the city manager had merely given me an advance look at what he had prepared for the council meeting.

I do not know the gentlemen who raised the Buck sign issue before the council, and while I did not agree with the connection he made to the war in Iraq, it should be obvious to the council that the wording on the banners is inappropriate. Perhaps it is legal, but it is politically incorrect and offensive. The sign fuels the belief that there is a "good old boy" mentality on the council. All one needs to do is attend various community functions to see that this may be true.

I do understand the Cemex concern, but I must say that when I listen to the council address the matter, it is difficult for me to not conclude that Councilman (Bob) Kellar has a vested interest in the matter. I am still confused as to why a Realtor was elected to the council, when one of the most prevalent issues that comes before the council is land development. It is disturbing to me that often Council Members Kellar and (Laurene) Weste have to be excused from voting because of their vested interest in the city. It must be difficult for Kellar to say no to Cemex when he beats his chest and admonishes those residents who do not want to support other development that he has approved. We received one of his lectures on the subject of growth at (the July 11) meeting. Suggesting birth control was a bit extreme in my view.

When you take your turn as mayor, I hope you will bring more transparency to the council. Additionally, I am not sure what has happened to (Councilman Frank Ferry), but he has almost checked out of the debate. I think this may be because Weste is too controlling and has promoted herself to Queen of the Valley. (Councilman Cameron Smyth) seems to have moved on to the state level before even being elected, and he seems to be no longer be interested in the council.

I was glad to watch you push back when Kellar tried to minimize your concern about the graffiti removal timing offered by AT&T. Graffiti is a big problem, and when I see graffiti, it makes me very angry.

Councilwoman McLean, I know you have the best interest of the community in your heart and I look forward to seeing you as mayor. Unfortunately, I think the other members of the council have outlived their usefulness.

Michael Middleton

Valencia

Via the Internet (www.the-signal.com)

Editor's note: For clarity's sake, each individual member of the City Council, including Kellar, opposes Cemex's Soledad Canyon mining plans. In fact, Kellar was in Washington, D.C. this past week to promote the McKeeon legislation that would cancel Cemex's mining contracts.

Council Imitates Bush's Authoritarianism

Editor:

The following is an open letter to columnist Bruce McFarland:
Your column (July 18) condemning the city officials for illegally placing the "Thank You, Buck" banners was

correct. I'm a typical voter, and my interpretation of the signs was that McKeon had reached an important goal, the blocking of Cemex's dangerous plan to quarry Soledad Canyon in a massive way. Instead, your column informs us that HR 5471 has only one sponsor — McKeon. So it is nearly impossible to see these signs as anything but City Council-sponsored electioneering.

The response you reported from the city officials and the City Council is yet another example of the authoritarianism so typical of Republicans, the Santa Clarita City Counsel, et al., imitating the Bush administration's clearly stated position that they will do whatever they want, regardless of the law. Yes, please do report these

obvious violations to the Federal Election Commission.

A provocative and scary question: At what nearly invisible point does strident authoritarianism cross the line into totalitarianism? Perhaps another milestone will be found in the November elections, if Republican officials again deprive Democratic voters of their suffrage, as happened in 2000 and 2004.

Tom Clayton
Newhall, via e-mail**Can't Get City Hall On the Line to Complain**

Editor:

Am I missing something here? Isn't Buck McKeon paid to safeguard the interests of Santa Clarita? He gets formal thanks from our City Council just for initiating a dead-end bill? How about thanking him for voting himself another raise while denying any increase to the federal minimum wage earners? Give me a break. My three calls to City Hall have gone unreturned. No surprise there.

Sheri Ruxton
Valencia

Via the Internet (www.the-signal.com)

Wanted: Equal Banner Time for Buck's Opponent

Editor:

Re: "City Leaders: Arrogant, Blind, or Just Smarter than Me?" by Bruce McFarland, Opinion, July 18:
I agree wholeheartedly with everything (McFarland) said. As soon as I saw the "Thank You, Buck" banners, the first thing that crossed my mind was, are we paying for those? I also agree that they are extremely misleading. They make it seem as if Buck McKeon is our

victorious David to Cemex's Goliath. Since they amount to free political advertising, I think they should either be removed immediately, or equal space should be provided for taxpayer-funded posters for Robert Rodriguez, McKeon's Democratic challenger.

Kim Wilczynski
Canyon Country

Via the Internet (www.the-signal.com)

There Must Be Better Ways to Spend \$4,500

Editor:

I am all in favor of giving credit where credit is due. The signs hanging around our city that say, "Thank You, Buck," are not only a waste of taxpayers' money (\$4,500), they are also misleading. Buck has done nothing except introduce legislation to ban the mine. That is his job — to introduce legislation. He has not successfully done anything pertaining to the mine, nor has he successfully addressed the many other issues that ordinary citizens in this valley are concerned about. Our city could have found better ways to spend \$4,500 than to campaign for Buck.

Catherine Flynn
Valencia

Via the Internet (www.the-signal.com)

Santa Clarita Valley

The

Signal

www.the-signal.com

Exhibit # 23
from The Signal
newspaper on
July 23, 2006

City Attorneys Defend 'Buck' Banners

■ Residents question use of city funds to show support for official.

By Josh Premake
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The city has the green light to keep up banners that thank an up-for-re-election congressman for introducing a bill that could reduce mining in the Santa Clarita Valley.

An attorney for the city said Thursday that the city has done nothing illegal by hanging 14 banners over city roads proclaiming "Thank you Buck for HR5471," referring to U.S. Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon.

This being an election year, some residents had questioned if the city was flirting with illegality by spending city funds to show support to a specific candidate.

McKeon, R-Santa Clarita, recently introduced HR5471 — a bill that, if passed, would provide Cemex Inc. with mining options outside the valley and severely limit any other mining here to historical levels of several hundred thousand tons per year.

The Mexico-based cement giant

plans to operate a 69 million-ton sand and gravel mine in Soledad Canyon starting in 2008.

On Thursday, city staff members and attorneys had a teleconference with officials from the Federal Elections Committee and concluded Santa Clarita was well within its rights to post the

banners, said attorney Sarah Gorman with Burke, Williams & Sorensen, the city's contracted law firm.

If there was a chance to do it over again, city spokeswoman Gail Ortiz said they would not change a thing about the signs, and added that the campaign "did what we wanted it to," by sparking interest and questions.

The "thank-you" banners cost

See BANNERS, page A4

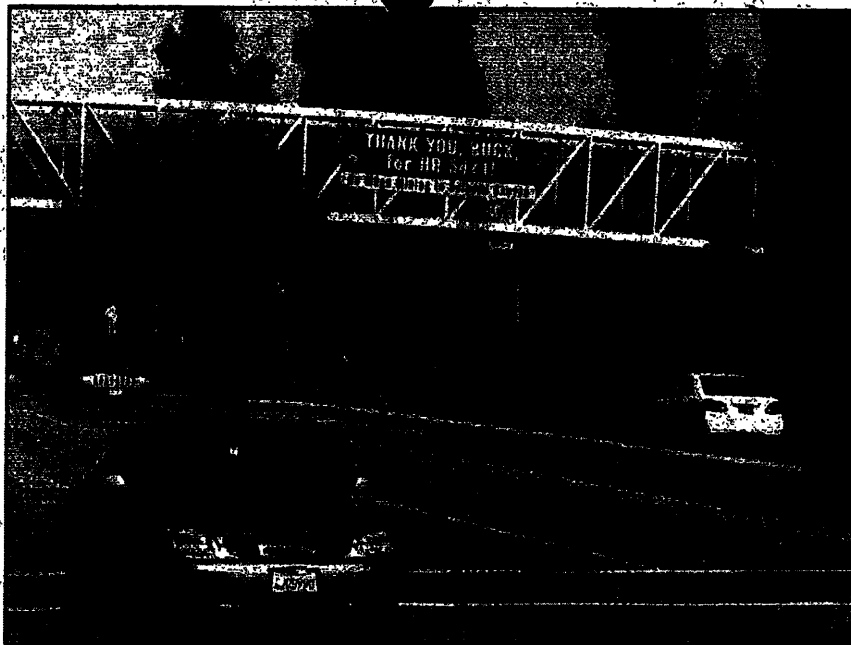
Banners

Continued from page A1

\$4,500 to print and will be taken down by the end of July, Ortiz said.

Additionally, the city is sending out 150,000 brochures to residents about the Cemex mine and McKeon's bill, with included tear-off postcards to send to government officials.

Ortiz said it cost \$2,500 to design the mailers, and \$25,438 to print them. The funds for the mailers and banners were made available through budgeted funds for community outreach related to the Cemex issue.



EVAN THOMASON/City of Santa Clarita

After talking with federal election officials, city attorney has determined that a formal opinion on the legality of the banners is unnecessary.

What's With the Banners?

By Carl K. Newton

The city of Santa Clarita has been fighting the proposed Cemex mega-mining project in Soledad Canyon for more than six years. Numerous staff, attorney, volunteer and consultant hours have been spent to prevent the siting of this massive aggregate mining project in Soledad Canyon.

And while the fight still continues, the fact that Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon introduced HR 5471, the Soledad Canyon Mine Leases Adjustments Act, is a major milestone for the city and our residents. If adopted, HR 5471 will protect both the needs of our community and the financial concerns of Cemex.

The City Council is very appreciative of Rep. McKeon's introduction of HR 5471. The introduction of this legislation is a high point for the city in this battle, as the concepts contained in HR 5471 are an outgrowth of approximately 18

months of discussions between the city and Cemex and could resolve the long-standing and costly litigation between the parties.

It has become very clear that the advancement of HR 5471 is going to take great efforts, and that much support for

Rep. McKeon's strong advocacy to gain congressional favor for HR 5471 was the necessary call to action. Consequently, the city embarked upon an aggressive campaign to enlist the support of residents and neighboring communities, specifically to advance the legislation.

As part of that campaign, the city developed the "Thank You, Buck, for HR 5471 — No Mega Mining in Soledad Canyon" banners.

The city designed the banners with two goals. First, the city wished to thank Rep. McKeon for the introduction and advancement of the legislation. Second, the city aimed to pique the curiosity of

See NEWTON, page C3

the community to want to find out what HR 5471 is all about, and what they can do to support the measure.

The city has already received numerous calls about the banners, demonstrating that this effort has been very effective. The banner program is succeeding, as demonstrated by community letters to the editor and guest editorials, and even the printing of photos of the banners on the front page of the newspaper.

There has been some speculation regarding the legality of the banners in the public right

of way. Under the city's Unified Development Code 17.19.03, the city is exempt from the code regarding postings in the public right of way.

Regarding any alleged violations of state or federal laws, our research supports our conclusion that the city's use of the banners is consistent with the law. The city has been in contact with the Federal Election Commission and a request for a formal opinion by the FEC was not warranted, according to conversations with the FEC this past week.

Carl K. Newton is the city attorney for the city of Santa Clarita. His column reflects the city's views, and not necessarily those of The Signal.

Exhibit # 24 from
The Signal
newspaper on
July 23, 2006

YOUR VIEWS: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Santa Clarita Should be Sending Real Leaders to Washington

Editor:

The Santa Clarita Valley is a prosperous suburb that affords it denizens many opportunities to contribute to the country's and the world's well being. One direct way to make such contributions is through the leaders we elect to state and national positions. As an educated population, we are better able than most to discern capable from inept candidates. Sadly, we have not exercised this capability as we have repeatedly elected poor leadership. Today, I write particularly about Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon. Local leaders have endorsed (his re-election), but his record is mediocre at best. He is not good for the country and he hasn't been good for us.

In the House of Representatives, he has provided no leadership at all. Has anyone outside of his district ever heard of him? The answer is no. His proposed education legislation to restrict higher education funding was so far off any principles of any party that it was DOA. McKeon has been a toady for the Bush administration. He votes the administration's line almost without exception (I've never found an exception).

Doing so does not add value for Santa Clarita. For example, the president's plan for Social Security was so inept, ridiculous and dangerous that it was removed by national acclamation. Incredibly, in one of his few detailed communications, McKeon wrote an opinion for the president's proposal (The Signal, Opinion, Jan. 16, 2005). Recently, he has been quoted regarding the war in Iraq that it is better to fight them over there rather than over here. Does anyone believe we are safer now after invading the only Middle Eastern country that didn't harbor terrorists? Everyone wants a strong defense and to thwart terrorists, but merely throwing money to defense, such as the B-2, without questions or insight, makes us weaker, not stronger.

McKeon manages to get good press when a tiny amount of money is doled out to local organizations. However, when it comes to important local issues, he doesn't deliver or is not the decisive force. He fore stalls debates before important elections instead of leading the discussions.

For a longtime Republican in a Republican administration, he has received minuscule funding for roads in the Santa Clarita Valley. Simply look at how long it has taken to build the cross-valley connector, a relatively straightforward project that is dragging on for lack of money. Meanwhile, the people in Bakersfield are awash in Republican-granted highway funds. McKeon's elevation up the House's lower hierarchy (head of the Education Committee) is unlikely to change this state of affairs.

The Cemex mining issue is close to the hearts of many Santa Claritans. Although he has talked about it, McKeon has been virtually missing in action in progressing on this matter. Sure, he has recently

proposed legislation to outlaw the mining above historic levels, but there is little justification for passing this bill on its own merits, and therefore a powerful congressman must get it through. We'll see.

Surely, as a community we can do better. The first step is to have capable people of either party run for office. Without competition, we get mediocrity.

Craig Gelpi
Canyon Country, via e-mail

Why Not Question Boxer and Feinstein's Disinterest?

Editor:

The famous Buck McKeon signs are viewed from my household as inappropriate because they wrongly indicate that the "no mega mining" is a done deal — not because the city is giving a politician free advertising. If indeed the latter were the city's motive, that's a bad move, and I would not want that for any political party's candidate.

There's a lot of hullabaloo over McKeon not having any co-sponsors for the bill. We need to take the next step and look to other California representatives — there are about another 48 of them — especially those of close neighboring districts, and ask, "Why?" Moreover, we can look further to our liberal Senate Democrats, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and point to their lack of interest. They benefit from votes from McKeon's territory, yet they are invisible.

Since it's nearly impossible to prove a negative, the allegation that the city hung the signs for strictly political purposes may ring hollow. It seems impossible to prove that similar signs would not have been bannered for any representative who acted positively for the community.

No representative, including McKeon, deserves praise for introducing the bill. It's his job, for Pete's sake.

Betty Arenson
Valencia, via e-mail

LETTERS POLICY

■ The Signal welcomes letters to the editor, provided they are original and include the writer's first and last name, address and daytime phone number. (Only the writer's name and community will be printed.) Letters and all other commentary represent the opinions of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Signal, its staff or management. Letters are limited to one per person, per month. The Signal reserves the right to edit letters based on content; those longer than 500 words may be edited for space. Anonymous letters will not be published, nor will names be withheld.

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FAX: (661) 255-9689

E-Mail: letters@the-signal.com (plain text only)

To Reach Us: 259-1234, ext. 234

27044163508

We the People Need Clean (Not Laundered) Money

Editor:

Re: "Thank You, Dems, for Seeing the Light" by Leon Worden, Opinion, July 19.

I was heartened to read in your (column) that you are as disillusioned as I am about Buck's efforts to carry legislation to help this community in the Cemex fight. You must realize that he really can't get anywhere with this bill because he has no support from his party.

If they start a practice of paying off every multinational that decides to set up a noxious business in some U.S. community and legislate to ship them off to another community, the U.S. Treasury would be broke — well, it already is, thanks to the Republicans' payoffs to corporate America — and a country-wide NIMBY revolt would take place, which would really devastate the Republican base.

The reason Buck is "taking a vacation" from the Armed Services

Committee is so the Republicans could appoint Brian Bilbray, the San Diego Republican who was elected to take Randy "Duke" Cunningham's seat until November. Bilbray sitting on Armed Services gives him a great opportunity to rake in lot of defense-contractor money for his November bid against the Democrat, Francine Busby.

Which leads me to your slam on Clean Money. Bruce McFarland was speaking of using public money by a governmental body, the City Council, to campaign for Buck with their "Thank You, Buck" signs. That use of tax money was illegal.

Additionally, no one gave the City Council permission to use our tax money to promote their partisan colleague. If Clean Money (Proposition 89) passes this November, it will mean that the people want public money to be spent on elections because they realize the current system is so corrupt that the only way for "we the people" to regain any control over our government is to level the playing field.

Clean Money is working every-

where it has been implemented with wide bipartisan support, just as it has bipartisan support here. If we had federal Clean Money now, any Clean Money candidate running against Buck could get \$5,000 — or however much it really cost to put up the banners, including labor — from the Clean Money account to erect big banners to counter the City Council's thinly disguised "Vote for Buck" banners.

You are also mistaken about the funding source proposed by Proposition 89. It will be funded by a 0.2-percent tax on corporations — which strikes me as a bit of wry justice, considering how big corporations have been raping and pillaging this country and the people since Reagan became president and began to dismantle any real, effective regulatory efforts by government.

Your derogatory comment, "For the unwashed, Clean Money is the cleverly named campaign to give every yahoo off the street a shot at public office," is not only insulting, but also erroneous. To be eligible for Clean Money, a candidate must

Exhibit # 26 from The Signal newspaper on July 25, 2006

collect thousands of signatures — the number varies according to the office being sought — and \$5 donations, which has been demonstrated to be very effective in weeding out the "candidates who are too unpopular or too clueless or too crazy to raise it on their own."

Your elitist-Hamiltonian, distrusting view of "we the people" and participatory democracy is showing, and it's not pretty. I realize you live in the rarified world of associating with the "movers and shakers" — read big-corporate-developer money — in this community, and the idea that we might have a variety of viewpoints and ideas about solving problems is disquieting to you and them. But "we the people" are sick and tired of big money controlling the government and our lives.

Clean Money levels the playing field, which is the only way to save our democracy and our planet from being destroyed by corporate greed.

Eleda Luther
Canyon Country, via e-mail

Give Equal Time, Money to McKeon's Challenger

Editor:

I couldn't agree more with Bruce McFarland's (column) about the banners the city put up on those paseo bridges with the high traffic volume below. The only way to correct this abuse by the city and mitigate the damage is to create at least as valuable publicity for (McKeon's) challenger, Robert Rodriguez.

Take Buck's signs down and put up signs in the same places for at least the same amount of time for Rodriguez. Or, determine the monetary value and donate that to Rodriguez's campaign. And \$5,000 is nothing like what it's worth, as your headline suggested. You can't buy such prime advertising space in this city, so I'm sure McFarland's calculation is closer to the true value.

Isaac Lieberman
Valencia, via e-mail

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Exhibit # 27 - spreadsheet calculating the advertising values of signs

EXHIBIT	column A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	LOCATION	Average Daily Vehicles	CPM	Daily Value at \$2.05 Per Day	30 Days Displayed Value	Daily Value at \$3.90 Per Day	30 Days Displayed Value
3	Eastbound Valencia Blvd between Magic Mtn and McBean	24,500	31.9	\$65.29	\$1,958.78	\$124.22	\$3,726.45
4	Westbound Valencia Blvd between Magic Mtn and McBean	24,500	31.9	\$65.29	\$1,958.78	\$124.22	\$3,726.45
5	Eastbound Magic Mtn Pkwy between Valencia and McBean	10,750	14.0	\$28.65	\$859.46	\$54.50	\$1,635.00
6	Westbound Magic Mtn Pkwy between Valencia and McBean	10,750	14.0	\$28.65	\$859.46	\$54.50	\$1,635.00
7	Northbound McBean Parkway between Creekside and Newhall Ranch	32,500	42.3	\$86.61	\$2,598.38	\$164.78	\$4,943.25
8	Southbound McBean Parkway between Creekside and Newhall Ranch	32,500	42.3	\$86.61	\$2,598.38	\$164.78	\$4,943.25
9	Northbound McBean Parkway between Del Monte and Arroyo Park Dr.	18,500	24.1	\$49.30	\$1,479.08	\$93.80	\$2,813.85
10	Eastbound Soledad Canyon Road on Golden Valley Bridge	27,500	35.8	\$73.29	\$2,198.63	\$139.43	\$4,182.75
11	Westbound Soledad Canyon Road on Golden Valley Bridge	27,500	35.8	\$73.29	\$2,198.63	\$139.43	\$4,182.75
12	Eastbound Newhall Ranch between Bouquet Canyon and McBean using average	15,750	20.5	\$41.97	\$1,259.21	\$79.85	\$2,395.58
13	Westbound Newhall Ranch between Bouquet Canyon and McBean using average	15,750	20.5	\$41.97	\$1,259.21	\$79.85	\$2,395.58
14	McBean Pkwy between Valencia and Magic Mtn Pkwy	21,500	28.0	\$57.30	\$1,718.93	\$109.01	\$3,270.15
	Totals for All Locations	262,000	340.6	\$698.23	\$20,946.90	\$1,328.34	\$39,850.20

Column A is Locations Verified and Photographed as Noted

Column B is Average Daily Vehicle Volume in One Direction per City Traffic Engineer Gus Pavetti

Column C (CPM) is Industry Standard Average Daily Vehicle Volume Divided by 1000 Times 1.3 Passengers per car

Column D is Daily Value at Low End of Quotes

Column E is 30 Days of Value at Low End of Quotes

Column F is Daily Value at High End of Quotes

Column G is 30 Days of Value at High End of Quotes

Total Cost of 12 Signs According to City Staffer Tina Haddad	\$4,500.00
Guesstimate of City Staff cost for Design of signs	\$300.00
Guesstimate for City Labor Installation Costs/ 3 workers @ \$25/hr + truck at \$150/day times 12 signs @ 1 hour each	\$1,125.00
Guesstimate for City Labor Removal Costs/ 3 workers @ \$25/hr + truck at \$150/day times 12 signs @ 45 minutes each	\$825.00
Guesstimate for Additional City Support Costs for Above Workers (taxes, insurance, other benefits)	\$270.00

Guesstimate of Actual Cost of 12 Signs Plus Design, Installation and Removal \$7,020.00

Computed Advertising Value to the Buck McKeon Campaign from \$27,966.90 to \$46,870.20

YOUR VIEWS: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

City Shouldn't Spend Tax Dollars to Thank Buck

Editor:

*The following is an open letter to
Santa Clarita City Manager Ken
Pulskamp.*

I believe the "Thanks Buck" signs hanging from the paseo bridges are inappropriate, and I hope my tax money was not used to buy the banners or to install them on the bridges. Buck did the job he is paid to do, and the signs are not necessary.

I doubt the city would tolerate a resident who hung a banner from the bridge to recognize a job well done by a family member or friend. One has to question the banners' adherence with the city signage laws.

McKeon has earned my vote, but those on the City Council who may be behind this obvious "good old boy" pat on the back have not.

Michael Middleton
Valencia

Via the Internet (www.the-signal.com)

Editor's note: Merely "thanking Buck" for introducing HR 5471 is not the purpose of the banners. They're designed to grab your attention so you'll call McKeon's office and urge him to push HR 5471 through Congress. The "job" won't be "done" until the legislation passes.

Pulskamp responds: "Recognizing that banners need to be quickly read while people are driving along local streets, they contain a minimum amount of verbiage. The banners do two things — they thank Rep. McKeon for introducing HR 5471 and hopefully pique curiosity for people to want to

find out what HR 5471 is all about. The banner program's goal is to use a non-traditional outreach method in connecting with people who may not have seen newspaper coverage about the bill." The banners and other outreach efforts, Pulskamp says, "are intended to assist in advancing HR 5471 through a difficult legislative process."

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